

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 046

SP 034 461

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TITLE Recommended General Education Core for the Coach/Teacher.
PUB DATE Mar 93
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (Washington, DC, March 24-28, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Education; *Athletic Coaches; Core Curriculum; *General Education; Higher Education; *Liberal Arts; *Physical Education Teachers; Preservice Teacher Education; Teacher Competencies; *Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Education Programs; Teacher Qualifications
IDENTIFIERS National Teacher Examinations; *NTE Core Battery

ABSTRACT

This paper offers a mechanism for producing a more marketable, competent professional coach/teacher, by addressing the content of the General Education Core. The paper discusses standards that must be met by graduates, including those of the National Teacher Examination (NTE), National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and individual states. It cites evidence that teacher education program content is related to performance on the NTE core battery. It points out that selective entry into teacher education programs can dramatically change the students' performance on exit exams. It notes that alternative teacher certification routes are generally available, but are heavily tied to individual state standards. A General Education Core is then presented, based upon a 67-hour content that is recommended for completion early in the student's college experience. The General Education Core covers: reasoning and communication skills (15 credit hours), social and behavioral sciences (15 credit hours), humanities and fine arts (12 credit hours), science (16 credit hours), and wellness (9 credit hours). (Contains 19 references.) (JDD)

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RECOMMENDED GENERAL EDUCATION CORE FOR THE COACH/TEACHER

Presentation at:
American Alliance of Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance National Convention
Washington, D.C.
March, 1993

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RECOMMENDED GENERAL EDUCATION CORE FOR THE COACH/TEACHER

During my professional career, I have had the pleasure of teaching in elementary, junior high school, high school, and college (undergraduate and graduate) in five southeastern states. I have been active in professional organizations for 12 consecutive years. In the countless conventions, workshops, seminars, etc. that I have attended and/or conducted, a central theme has always been present - how to better prepare the professionals in our field where they will be more marketable and competent once employed. I have seen trends come (testing and more testing) and go (open, unstructured classrooms). A Nation-at-Risk produced enormous rhetoric. It seems every state has passed educational reform acts; more money - less money. Where are we in higher education and how does the presentation fit into our future in coaching and teaching?

The purpose of our presentation is to offer a mechanism that meets the previously stated criterion; i.e. to produce a more marketable, competent professional coach/teacher. The specific component I will address is the General Education Core.

The General Education core has its roots in the arts and sciences with the basic tenant an educationed professional should be well-rounded. This will not be debated. We know that the majority of the schools of education utilize the NTE as a measure of performance assessment. The NTE Core Battery has been accepted as having the ability to measure the well-roundedness that is deemed a desirable feature in an educated professional. Therefore, for years we have sought ways to structure our curriculum to ensure the desirable traits are produced and the student passes the NTE. It should be noted that a letter from Educational Testing Service received August 7, 1992, outlines the changes the NTE will implement beginning Fall, 1993. (Educational Testing Service Bulletin; The Praxies Series; Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers). Therefore, we can expect a new flurry of recommended curricular changes in the very near future.

A brief review of the literature that relates to the NTE and how it predicts, screens, and/or equates to academic performance reveals a wealth of information. In a significant study conducted in 1988 (Wakeford) predictive validity of the NTE Core Battery was examined. Wakeford found

that based upon the 444 University of North Carolina graduates, test scores were not anymore useful than GPAs in predicting academic performance. Though it was noted that the test scores were accurate in predicting the scores on the professional knowledge component of the core battery. More and others found similar results in 1991. They reported that when GPAs of 493 first-year teachers were correlated with teaching effectiveness and the NTE Core Battery, NTE scores did not predict teacher effectiveness any better than GPA. In 1989, Pultorak and Edward stated they had found the NTE Core score more closely paralleled required college courses than student teaching performance. An interesting side bar of the Pultorak and Edwards study was that physical education majors were screened out by the core battery score at a rate higher than any other secondary education major.

An evaluative report by the state of North Carolina in 1988 concluded that "reliance on the NTE by administrators when hiring new teachers is questioned." The conclusion was based upon a comparison of the NTE scores and teaching performance scores as determined by the teacher performance instrument used in North Carolina.

In 1985, a research report generated by the state of New Jersey reported significant differences exist in pass rates on the NTE with racial/ethnic groups. Coley and Goertz substantiated the New Jersey report in 1990. Their findings were similar. Ethnic/racial groups have significantly lower pass rates on the NTE. Both studies concluded that academic intervention is needed to impact the special populations.

Numerous states (NC, NY, NJ, TN, LA, GA, CA) have conducted validation studies and each has found similar results. Content is related to the core battery. The communication component is the most often failed item. States have selected slightly different levels of acceptance as passing scores.

I have had the opportunity to teach teacher candidates in three universities. Two were regional with a proud tradition of quality undergraduate instruction and the other a nationally known university. The incoming freshmen at the regional institutions had lower ACT/SAT averages than their counterparts in the nationally renowned institution. I chose not to identify the

respective schools. My first teaching encounter was at an "old normal" school. Their records indicated that of the institutions of higher education within that state, their incoming freshmen had the lowest overall average admission score (ACT). Yet, the university reported their graduates performed at a higher level than any other institution as measured by exit exams. As you might expect the physical education majors struggled. Their entry scores were low; their pass rate on the NTE was barely minimum standards. At the major institution, the incoming freshman averaged 982 on the SAT; this is approximately the 64th percentile. The NTE pass rate at this university is in the 90% range with no screening! The third institution of employment is another regional school. An eight year longitudinal study revealed that the graduating physical education majors had a composite ACT average of 16 (19th percentile). The pass rate for the NTE is set at:

General Knowledge	647 or 22nd percentile
Communication	651 or 32nd percentile
Professional Knowledge	643 or 8th percentile

As in the first, the physical education majors struggled. We know that a reliable and valid test is supposed to generate similar results. A concept that is being discussed in the literature is "front loading." If your admission standards are sufficiently high - then your pass rate will be within the NCATE approved range regardless of your curriculum and/or your screening strategy.

The last area of discussion involves the educational reform acts that have swept the nation. Because of tighter standards when the reforms were invoked, teacher shortages were expected. Alternative certification tracks were created in most states. This average has rekindled the flame of argument between liberal arts and education. Liberals arts stating the importance of content and education citing the need for pedagogical skill. NCATE standards have been strengthened to the level where only approximately 40% of the schools pursuing the standard pass on the first effort (NCATE Bulletin, 1993). The literature is literally full of suggested ways to meet the teacher short-fall. The Dean at The University of Tennessee at Martin has been very active with educational reform and implementation of the new NCATE standards throughout the south. Dean Rush has stated alternative certification by any name has liberal arts philosophy as a basic tenant - a

content enriched baccalaureate degree. Then, with "some type of training" the teacher becomes certified. He also noted that the rural areas of the nation - where the teaching short-fall is so prevalent - is where the unemployed liberal arts prepared degree bearing individual is least likely to be found (Interview, Spring, 1993).

To summarize the discussion to the point:

1. We wish to produce a more marketable, confident professional (coach/teacher) and
2. The graduates must meet standards - NTE, NCATE, State
3. Selective entry can dramatically change the students' performance on exit exams.
4. Alternative routes are generally available, but heavily tied to individual state standards.
5. Content seems to be a key to core battery performance for minority/ethnic groups as well as the remaining population.

The general education core that is being recommended utilizes the principles of the five summary statements. It is based upon a 67 hour content that should be completed early in the student's college experience. And, if one is to increase their chances of passing the communication and general knowledge component - then it is recommended that the student take those components as soon as the general education core is fulfilled. And lastly, but just as important, the selected courses will hopefully help prepare the future professional as a more competent coach/teacher.

RECOMMENDED GENERAL EDUCATION CORE FOR COACHING/TEACHING CERTIFICATION

REASONING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS (15 hrs)

English 1 & 2	Writing fundamentals	6 hr
Speech	Group Communication	3 hr
Math	College Algebra	3 hr
Communication	Introduction to Computers	3 hr

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES (15 hrs)

Economics	General Business	3 hr
World Geography	Cultural Diversity	3 hr
General Psychology	Individual Dynamics	3 hr
General Sociology	Group and Gender Dynamics	3 hr
Philosophy	Ethics and Morality	3 hr

HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS (12 hrs)

World Literature	Cultural Diversity	3 hr
Fine Arts	Cultural Diversity	3 hr
World Civilization 1 & 2	Cultural Diversity	6 hr

SCIENCE (16 hrs)

Chemical Science	Prep for Exercise Science	4 hr
Biological Science	Prep for Ana & Physio	4 hr
Anatomy & Physiology	Prep for Kinesiology	4 hr
Physical Science	Prep for Biomechanics	4 hr

WELLNESS (9 hrs)

First Aid/CPR	Prep for Sport Medicine	3 hr
Personal Health	Substance Abuse Background	3 hr
Nutrition	Prep for Sport Nutrition	3 hr

TOTAL HOURS 67 hrs

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